

International Affairs Department

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your warm hospitality during my departure and arrival. I've just joined the Project as a JICA expert in Vietnam. During my two-year assignment, I will regularly report the Project's details and my daily life as a "*Pho*" rest Journal.

The first issue is the summary of the Project and a delivered lunch box.

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Project I work for is the "Technical Assistance Project for Enhancing Management Capacity of Sewage Works," (the Project) of which purpose is to enhance the capacity of the planning and implementation of Vietnamese people on sewage works.

Vietnam has a rapid economic growth of an average of 7% and over every year after the 1990s with urbanization. Today, the country has serious environmental problems including water pollution as a disadvantage of urbanization.

Recently, the Government of Vietnam has reinforced efforts to tackle environmental issues. They attempt to improve facilities for environmental pollution prevention, such as public wastewater treatment plants.

However, since sewage works are a new business in Vietnam, they have insufficient human resources, knowledge, and technology. To solve such problems, the Ministry of Construction (MOC) of Vietnam asked the Japanese government for help. Then, the Project established a human resource cultivation system for sewage works in Vietnam.

The Project will run for three years and four months, from February 2016 to May 2019. Since the Project has already started, my mission is to give shape to the implementation method to achieve goals.

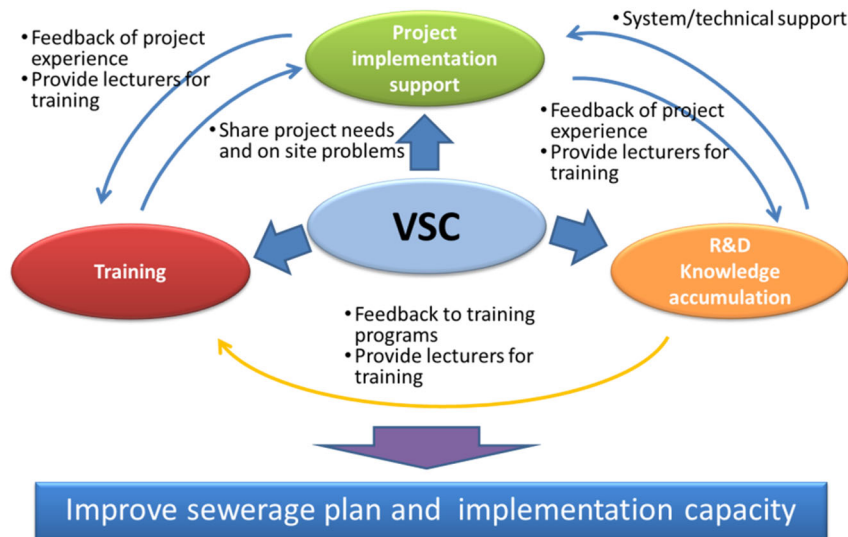


Figure 1: Three functions of VSC and their synergy effects (Refer project paper)

The governments of Vietnam and Japan have agreed to establish Vietnam Sewerage Center (VSC). VSC is a sort of Vietnamese JS and has three primary functions "Training," "Business Implementation Support," and "Research and Development (R&D)" (Figure 1).

I arrived in Vietnam on May 17 and first met a new director general of MOC on May 26, who is a Vietnamese superintendent of the Project. I have not met my counterpart on the Vietnamese side yet, but I can hardly wait to see them soon. I'm so excited to join the team and work on the Project.

2. DELIVERED LUNCH BOX

Lunchtime starts at twelve also in the Project office. Sometimes the intense sunshine of May discourages me from eating out for lunch.

At moments like this, there is a good service here in Vietnam, like in Japan. It is a lunch box delivery service!

When Vietnamese staff orders lunch boxes by phone around eleven, they are delivered to the office at twelve.

A plastic container has rice, some dishes, a sealed plastic cup, and cutleries (Photo 1). That day's lunch menu was fried egg, pork *kakuni*, and fried vegetables (cabbage, maybe) over rice. I've heard the menu was a request from our Vietnamese staff. As you can see from the photo, the plastic cup on your right has something like the most famous mouse in the world printed on it. The content of the cup is seemingly juice, but soup.



Photo 1: Lunch box #1



Photo 2: Lunch box #2

Another lunch box had roasted pork, minced pork- stuffed deep-fried tofu, fried bean sprout, and fried spinach-like vegetables (Photo 2).

Vietnamese rice has a less sticky texture than Japanese and perfectly matches rich or bitter Vietnamese dishes. I've become very fond of Vietnamese food.

The delivered lunch boxes were a new experience for me, who knew little about Vietnamese food except "Pho" (rice noodle; used as a title of the journal) and "Goi Cuon" (fresh spring rolls).